

**A M E N D M E N T****IN THE CLAIMS:**

Please **ADD** Claims **50** to **77** as follows:

---

1. (Cancel)
2. to 49. (Previously Cancelled)
50. (NEW) A method comprising:
- generating an outcome represented by a plurality of symbols;
  - counting occurrences of at least one tracked symbol; and
  - determining a bonus payout based on a number of occurrences of the at least one tracked symbol counted in accordance with an expiration condition.
51. (NEW) The method of claim 50 wherein counting occurrences of at least one tracked symbol includes incrementing a count value by an integer value.
52. (NEW) The method of claim 50 wherein the expiration condition includes a number of plays after which an occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol expires, and
- wherein the method further includes determining an expiration of an occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol based the expiration condition.
53. (NEW) The method of claim 50 wherein the expiration condition includes a time after which an occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol expires, and

wherein the method further includes determining an expiration of an occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol based the expiration condition.

54. (NEW) The method of claim 50 wherein counting occurrences of at least one tracked symbol is performed only if a payout amount for the outcome is less than a predefined amount.

55. (NEW) The method of claim 51 further including storing the count value on a player tracking card, and wherein the count value includes status data related to an expiration criterion of each occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol.

31 56. (NEW) The method of claim 51 further including storing the count value at a slot server, and wherein the count value includes status data related an expiration criterion of each occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol.

57. (NEW) The method of claim 50 wherein determining a bonus payout further includes determining the bonus payout based on a number of plays of the slot machine.

58. (NEW) The method of claim 50 wherein determining a bonus payout further includes determining the bonus payout based on a duration of time.

59. (NEW) The method of claim 51 wherein the count value represents occurrences of the at least one tracked symbol generated by a second slot machine.

60. (NEW) The method of claim 50 further including receiving a wager, and

wherein determining a bonus payout further includes determining the bonus payout based on the wager.

61. (NEW) The method of claim 51 wherein the at least one tracked symbol includes at least one bonus symbol which contributes to the count value and at least one offsetting symbol, and

wherein counting occurrences of at least one tracked symbol further includes decrementing the count value with each occurrence of the at least one offsetting symbol.

62. (NEW) The method of claim 50 further including:

determining a payout, and

wherein determining a bonus payout comprises determining a multiplier to be applied to the payout.

63. (NEW) The method of claim 50 wherein determining a bonus payout includes determining points for a slot play reward system.

64. (NEW) The method of claim 63 further including determining a payout for expired occurrences of the at least one tracked symbol.

65. (NEW) The method of claim 50 wherein generating an outcome is performed by a gaming device.

66. (NEW) The method of claim 65 wherein the gaming device includes a reel slot machine and the symbols include reel symbols.

67. (NEW) The method of claim 66 wherein the reel slot machine includes a symbol display window and a payout line visible within the symbol display window; and  
wherein counting occurrences of at least one tracked symbol includes selecting at least one tracked symbol from among all symbols displayed in the symbol display window.

68. (NEW) The method of claim 66 wherein counting occurrences of at least one tracked symbol includes selecting the at least one tracked symbol from among symbols on a specified reel of the reel slot machine.

131

69. (NEW) The method of claim 65 wherein the gaming device includes video poker machine and the symbols include playing card attributes.

70. (NEW) The method of claim 69 wherein the at least one tracked symbol comprises a function of the face value of cards dealt in a hand.

71. (NEW) A method comprising:  
identifying at least one tracked symbol;  
associating an expiration condition with each occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol wherein each occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol expires after its associated expiration condition has been satisfied; and

determining a bonus payout based upon a count value wherein the count value equals the number of occurrences of the tracked symbol during play less the number of expired tracked symbols.

72. (NEW) A method comprising:

identifying at least one tracked symbol having an associated expiration condition wherein an occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol expires upon the associated expiration condition becoming satisfied;

identifying a bonus value;

determining a count value wherein the count value is incremented when there is an occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol and the count value is decremented when an occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol expires; and

providing a bonus payout when the count value exceeds the bonus value.

73. (NEW) The method of claim 72 wherein determining a count value further includes:

initializing the count value upon initiation of a session of play by a player; and

terminating the determining of the count value upon termination of the session of play by the player.

74. (NEW) A gaming device comprising:

a processor;

a memory coupled to the processor storing a program to control the operation of the processor;

the processor operative with the program to:

generate an outcome represented by a plurality of symbols;

count occurrences of at least one tracked symbol; and

determining a bonus payout based on a number of occurrences of the at least one tracked symbol counted in accordance with an expiration condition.

75. (NEW) The gaming device of claim 74 wherein the processor counts occurrences of the at least one tracked symbol by incrementing a count value by an integer value.

76. (NEW) The gaming device of claim 74 wherein the expiration condition represents a number of plays after which an occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol expires and the processor is further operative with the program to determine an expiration of an occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol based on the expiration condition.

77. (NEW) The slot machine of claim 74 wherein the expiration condition represents a time after which an occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol expires and the processor is further operative with the program to determine an expiration of an occurrence of the at least one tracked symbol based on the expiration condition.

---